



Shasta County Farm Bureau

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August 10, 2000

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CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director
Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

As a member of a Farm Bureau that represents over 1600 members, I must comment on the newly released EIS/EIR for the Cal-Fed program. I am concerned about how Cal-Fed programs will affect the environment on farms and ranches. Agriculture is an important part of California's environment. Your plan intends to convert nearly a quarter of a million acres of farmland to habitat and other uses. It should study the environmental impact of that land conversion and seek ways to avoid taking farmland out of production.

I know many farmers who enhance the wildlife value of their farms. We are stewards of the land and we want to be partners in environmental restoration. But we oppose requirements that tell us what to grow and how to grow it. Cal-Fed must work with us in a cooperative spirit.

To maintain productive and wildlife-friendly farms, farmers need reliable and affordable water. Cal-Fed must move aggressively to develop new water storage that provides adequate yield. Without more storage, California won't have enough water for the environment in dry years. That means water will be taken away from farms, especially during droughts. Without water, farmland loses its value as habitat and as a vital food resource for California's growing population.

I ask two things of you. First extend the period to look through the document and provide comments on the final EIS/EIR released on July 21. As a farmer I can't adequately review the thousands of pages in the document in the time allowed. In addition, hold public hearings to explain what you will do and the effects on us. Many changes were made to the report, which the public needs to have an opportunity to understand and address. I fear that even after we review the document there will be a lot that we won't understand. Even though you may not feel obligated to tell us how the plan will affect us, it's the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Bill Wright

Treasurer, Shasta County Farm Bureau

Cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein State Senator Maurice Johannesen County Supervisor Hawes
Senator Barbara Boxer Assembly Member Dick Dickerson County Supervisor Wilson
Rep. Wally Herger County Supervisor Kehoe County Supervisor Clarke
Governor Gray Davis County Supervisor Fust